



TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL FOR SOUTHERN MARYLAND

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March 7, 2014

Thomas Wheeler, Chairman
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Jonathan Chambers

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20024

Re: Expression of Interest – Rural Broadband Trials
Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

On behalf of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, I am submitting this expression of interest in the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) desire to create a Rural Broadband Trials Program whose goal is to bring high-speed Internet access to those areas of rural America that still suffer from lack of broadband service. While we do not have a project to propose, we take this opportunity to document our Southern Maryland's need for high-speed Internet service.

The region of Southern Maryland, comprised of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties is a mixture of urban and rural communities, which has only recently seen an accessible broadband middle-mile be lit. Much work and related costs remain to build-out the regional infrastructure to have reliable delivery of a broadband/4G wireline or wireless to a significant percentage of residences and businesses throughout the region. One of the Tri-County Council's strategic initiatives for this year is to make significant progress toward making broadband service available to all homes in our Southern Maryland Region.

With a population base of over 350,000 individuals and 120,000 households, the region retains the characteristic of "haves and have not's"; or connected and not connected. The potential assistance by the FCC to tackle the lack of Internet access in rural parts of the country will help to eliminate this "digital divide". Additionally, it will directly support our region's efforts to be recognized as an emerging technology community and a viable destination for companies to locate their business operations in Southern Maryland.

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Like many communities in America, Southern Maryland is striving to sustain its competitiveness by keeping pace with modern technology that has become synonymous with the economic viability, educational opportunity, and sustained quality of life. Please accept our expression of interest and alert us to the opportunity to submit an application for participation in the Rural Broadband Trials Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John F. Hartline". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John F. Hartline
Executive Director
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

CC.: Delegate Mark Fisher
Commissioner Steve Weems, Tri-County Council, Chair
F. John McQuaid, Broadband Implementation Coordinator, Eastern Shore
Regional GIS Cooperative, Salisbury University